

at the hearing, and all papers and requests filed in the proceeding constitute the record for decision by the ALJ and the Secretary.

(c) The record may be inspected and copied (upon payment of a reasonable fee) by any person, unless otherwise ordered by the ALJ for good cause shown.

(d) For good cause, the ALJ may order appropriate redactions made to the record.

§ 160.544 Post hearing briefs.

The ALJ may require the parties to file post-hearing briefs. In any event, any party may file a post-hearing brief. The ALJ must fix the time for filing the briefs. The time for filing may not exceed 60 days from the date the parties receive the transcript of the hearing or, if applicable, the stipulated record. The briefs may be accompanied by proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law. The ALJ may permit the parties to file reply briefs.

§ 160.546 ALJ's decision.

(a) The ALJ must issue a decision, based only on the record, which must contain findings of fact and conclusions of law.

(b) The ALJ may affirm, increase, or reduce the penalties imposed by the Secretary.

(c) The ALJ must issue the decision to both parties within 60 days after the time for submission of post-hearing briefs and reply briefs, if permitted, has expired. If the ALJ fails to meet the deadline contained in this paragraph, he or she must notify the parties of the reason for the delay and set a new deadline.

(d) Unless the decision of the ALJ is timely appealed as provided for in § 160.548, the decision of the ALJ will be final and binding on the parties 60 days from the date of service of the ALJ's decision.

§ 160.548 Appeal of the ALJ's decision.

(a) Any party may appeal the decision of the ALJ to the Board by filing a notice of appeal with the Board within 30 days of the date of service of the ALJ decision. The Board may extend the initial 30 day period for a period of time not to exceed 30 days if a party files with the Board a request for an

extension within the initial 30 day period and shows good cause.

(b) If a party files a timely notice of appeal with the Board, the ALJ must forward the record of the proceeding to the Board.

(c) A notice of appeal must be accompanied by a written brief specifying exceptions to the initial decision and reasons supporting the exceptions. Any party may file a brief in opposition to the exceptions, which may raise any relevant issue not addressed in the exceptions, within 30 days of receiving the notice of appeal and the accompanying brief. The Board may permit the parties to file reply briefs.

(d) There is no right to appear personally before the Board or to appeal to the Board any interlocutory ruling by the ALJ.

(e) Except for an affirmative defense under § 160.410(b)(1) of this part, the Board may not consider any issue not raised in the parties' briefs, nor any issue in the briefs that could have been raised before the ALJ but was not.

(f) If any party demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Board that additional evidence not presented at such hearing is relevant and material and that there were reasonable grounds for the failure to adduce such evidence at the hearing, the Board may remand the matter to the ALJ for consideration of such additional evidence.

(g) The Board may decline to review the case, or may affirm, increase, reduce, reverse or remand any penalty determined by the ALJ.

(h) The standard of review on a disputed issue of fact is whether the initial decision of the ALJ is supported by substantial evidence on the whole record. The standard of review on a disputed issue of law is whether the decision is erroneous.

(i) Within 60 days after the time for submission of briefs and reply briefs, if permitted, has expired, the Board must serve on each party to the appeal a copy of the Board's decision and a statement describing the right of any respondent who is penalized to seek judicial review.

(j)(1) The Board's decision under paragraph (i) of this section, including

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a decision to decline review of the initial decision, becomes the final decision of the Secretary 60 days after the date of service of the Board's decision, except with respect to a decision to remand to the ALJ or if reconsideration is requested under this paragraph.

(2) The Board will reconsider its decision only if it determines that the decision contains a clear error of fact or error of law. New evidence will not be a basis for reconsideration unless the party demonstrates that the evidence is newly discovered and was not previously available.

(3) A party may file a motion for reconsideration with the Board before the date the decision becomes final under paragraph (j)(1) of this section. A motion for reconsideration must be accompanied by a written brief specifying any alleged error of fact or law and, if the party is relying on additional evidence, explaining why the evidence was not previously available. Any party may file a brief in opposition within 15 days of receiving the motion for reconsideration and the accompanying brief unless this time limit is extended by the Board for good cause shown. Reply briefs are not permitted.

(4) The Board must rule on the motion for reconsideration not later than 30 days from the date the opposition brief is due. If the Board denies the motion, the decision issued under paragraph (i) of this section becomes the final decision of the Secretary on the date of service of the ruling. If the Board grants the motion, the Board will issue a reconsidered decision, after such procedures as the Board determines necessary to address the effect of any error. The Board's decision on reconsideration becomes the final decision of the Secretary on the date of service of the decision, except with respect to a decision to remand to the ALJ.

(5) If service of a ruling or decision issued under this section is by mail, the date of service will be deemed to be 5 days from the date of mailing.

(k)(1) A respondent's petition for judicial review must be filed within 60 days of the date on which the decision of the Board becomes the final decision of the Secretary under paragraph (j) of this section.

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(2) In compliance with 28 U.S.C. 2112(a), a copy of any petition for judicial review filed in any U.S. Court of Appeals challenging the final decision of the Secretary must be sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to the General Counsel of HHS. The petition copy must be a copy showing that it has been time-stamped by the clerk of the court when the original was filed with the court.

(3) If the General Counsel of HHS received two or more petitions within 10 days after the final decision of the Secretary, the General Counsel will notify the U.S. Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation of any petitions that were received within the 10 day period.

§ 160.550 Stay of the Secretary's decision.

(a) Pending judicial review, the respondent may file a request for stay of the effective date of any penalty with the ALJ. The request must be accompanied by a copy of the notice of appeal filed with the Federal court. The filing of the request automatically stays the effective date of the penalty until such time as the ALJ rules upon the request.

(b) The ALJ may not grant a respondent's request for stay of any penalty unless the respondent posts a bond or provides other adequate security.

(c) The ALJ must rule upon a respondent's request for stay within 10 days of receipt.

§ 160.552 Harmless error.

No error in either the admission or the exclusion of evidence, and no error or defect in any ruling or order or in any act done or omitted by the ALJ or by any of the parties is ground for vacating, modifying or otherwise disturbing an otherwise appropriate ruling or order or act, unless refusal to take such action appears to the ALJ or the Board inconsistent with substantial justice. The ALJ and the Board at every stage of the proceeding must disregard any error or defect in the proceeding that does not affect the substantial rights of the parties.